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THE WHITE HOUSE

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

RE: 12 o'clock meeting on Southeast Asia

The immediate Southeast Asia situation has not changed since last night. If you have had time to read the paper, you can say so and reduce discussion by turning attention to specific questions. John McCone would like to open with a few minutes of intelligence briefing and I think this is helpful. The only significant new piece of intelligence is that we have [redacted] and no direct estimate is available today, but McCone may mention this new evidence on a most important problem.

SEC 1.3 1.3(a)(

You will want to ask Rusk for a brief discussion. The specific questions which I suggest are these:

1. You assume we plan to put these matters succinctly to CINPAC and to Max Taylor for comment.

2. You understand there is difference of opinion about means of attacking the Laos infiltration routes and especially on the question of U.S. aircraft. You would like to hear argument on this point.

3. Is there any consensus on the timing of the next DESOTO patrol and on its combat instructions?

4. You may wish to repeat to others what you have said to me about following up on Goldwater's assertion that you gave an admonition to commanders to use any weapons, including nuclear weapons. I have been pressing this with many newspaper men and find a surprising reaction -- which is that everyone knows Barry is this kind of fool and there is not much news in it any more! My own conclusion is that if you wish to put more light on this folly, you may have to do it yourself in a press conference, and I am working on possible language.

5. You may wish to ask Wheeler if the Army is using all its best -- and also its most experienced -- men in South Vietnam.

The general result of this meeting should be agreement on further study and refinement of a program in which we are free to take appropriate initiatives, together with an instruction to consult further in the Pacific. McNamara will be away all next week, and if the situation does not change sharply, we will probably not wish to make big decisions until his return on Monday, the 24th.

McG. B.

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By [illegible], NARS, Date 9-13-85

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